

NORTH BANK PARK DEDICATION HIGHLIGHTED BY WATERFIRE ON THE MILE DEBUT

***Park is Northern Anchor of Scioto Mile that will Spur Downtown
Revitalization and Redevelopment***

(COLUMBUS) Mayor Michael B. Coleman, City Council President Matthew D. Habash, Recreation and Parks Director Wayne Roberts, State Representative Jim McGregor and Nationwide Realty Investors President and Chief Operating Officer Brian Ellis will join citizens to dedicate Downtown's new North Bank Park on Saturday, July 16, at 9:00 p.m. The ceremony will be followed by an exciting, new, downtown event - the inaugural burning of WaterFire on the Mile. WaterFire is a public art installation project of fire and music featuring 50 burning braziers on the Scioto River. Mayor Coleman will light the first brazier at 9:30 p.m. The WaterFire debut will be preceded by a variety of art performances and will continue with music until 2 a.m.

The events are free and open to the public.

"This is the first of what will be many new improvements, investments and entertainment events along our riverfront for the years to come," said Mayor Coleman. "Great cities have great parks, and we are opening North Bank with a unique event that can be enjoyed by all. Investing in our parks will reap economic benefits that will spur revitalization throughout Downtown."

Under the city's ongoing Downtown redevelopment efforts, nearly 3,650 residential units are being added to the Downtown housing market; more than 1,500 new jobs are coming to the area; and entertainment and festivals are attracting attendees from across the Midwest.

"The momentum Downtown continues, making Columbus an even greater destination of choice," said Council President Habash. "North Bank Park is another jewel and terrific example of how strategic investments are making a difference."

In addition to green and open space, parks provide economic benefits. Research shows that property values near parks are higher and increase more rapidly than those a few blocks away. Parks also spur residential development - particularly in urban areas where homes often lack front or back yards.

"We believe that North Bank Park is a tremendous amenity for our city, especially those who choose to live downtown," said Ellis. "An urban park of this caliber will promote and create the demand for more residential housing throughout downtown."

The park is located at 311 West Long Street at the terminus of Neil Avenue. Spanning 11 acres, the park is adjacent to the developing Arena District. North Bank Park creates a new, green gateway into Downtown and includes a boat dock, walkways, picnic facilities, an interactive water fountain, a enclosed glass pavilion, and connections to the 17-mile Scioto/ Olentangy trail system. The \$14.5 million project was funded with \$8.75 million from the State of Ohio capital budget and an investment of \$5.75 million from the City of Columbus' capital budget.

North Bank Park is the first phase the Scioto Mile - an integrated system of bike and pedestrian paths, urban streets and riverfront parks following the riverfront south through Downtown to the Whittier Peninsula.

“North Bank Park is a key element of the Mayor's plan to rejuvenate Downtown,” said Director Wayne Roberts. “We are very proud of this new addition to Columbus’ great park system and we want everyone to come down and enjoy it as often as possible. And, we're also excited about its use as a neighborhood park for current and future residents living in the Downtown area.”

Saturday, July 16, Schedule of Events:

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| 9:00 p.m. | North Bank Park Dedication Ceremony |
| 9:30 p.m. | Waterfire on the Mile Program, including torch processional |
| 9:45 p.m. | Mayor Coleman to light first Waterfire brazier |